



## Syria/Israel: Errant Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) Impacts near Israeli Critical Infrastructure

During the overnight hours of 21 to 22 April 2021, a Syrian SA-5 surface-to-air missile (SAM) impacted approximately 125 miles (200km) into Israeli territory, according to press reporting and Israeli military statements. Syrian air defense forces launched the SA-5 at an Israeli military aircraft operating over the Golan Heights region; however, the SA-5 missile missed the aircraft and traveled into Israeli territory. The missile impacted in southern Israel, approximately 19 miles (30 km) from a critical infrastructure site. Israeli military forces responded to the missile attack with multiple airstrikes targeting the Syrian air defense battery that launched the missile and joint Syrian-Iranian-associated sites near Damascus, Syria.

This incident follows several weeks of increased tensions between Israel and Iran, resulting in intensified Israeli airstrikes on Iranian-aligned militia groups in Syria and alleged reciprocal attacks against maritime vessels in the region. In addition, Iran previously blamed Israel for a 13 April explosion at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

Israeli officials do not assess the SA-5 deliberately targeted the critical infrastructure site in southern Israel. Nevertheless, Syrian air defense forces have previously overshot or missed their targets with SAM fire, and there have been other instances of errant missiles flying beyond the Damascus (OSTT) Flight Information Region (FIR) and into or through adjacent Flight Information Regions (FIRs). During 2019 and 2020, errant Syrian SA-5 launches resulted in missile and/or debris impacts in Jordan, Lebanon, the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and northern Cyprus. The Syrian regime's employment of long-range SAM systems, such as the SA-5, poses a potential inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating in the region, as potential missile trajectories may pass through or near international air routes.

### **Outlook:**

Syrian long-range SAM launches present an ongoing inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) and the adjacent FIRs. While Syrian air defense forces have not deliberately targeted civil aviation during the aforementioned SAM engagements, U.S. civil aviation operating on international air routes in the region, as well as to civil airports and related infrastructure, could be struck by an errant missile or debris from an in-flight missile detonation. Populated areas, critical infrastructure, and maritime vessels could be exposed to similar risk.

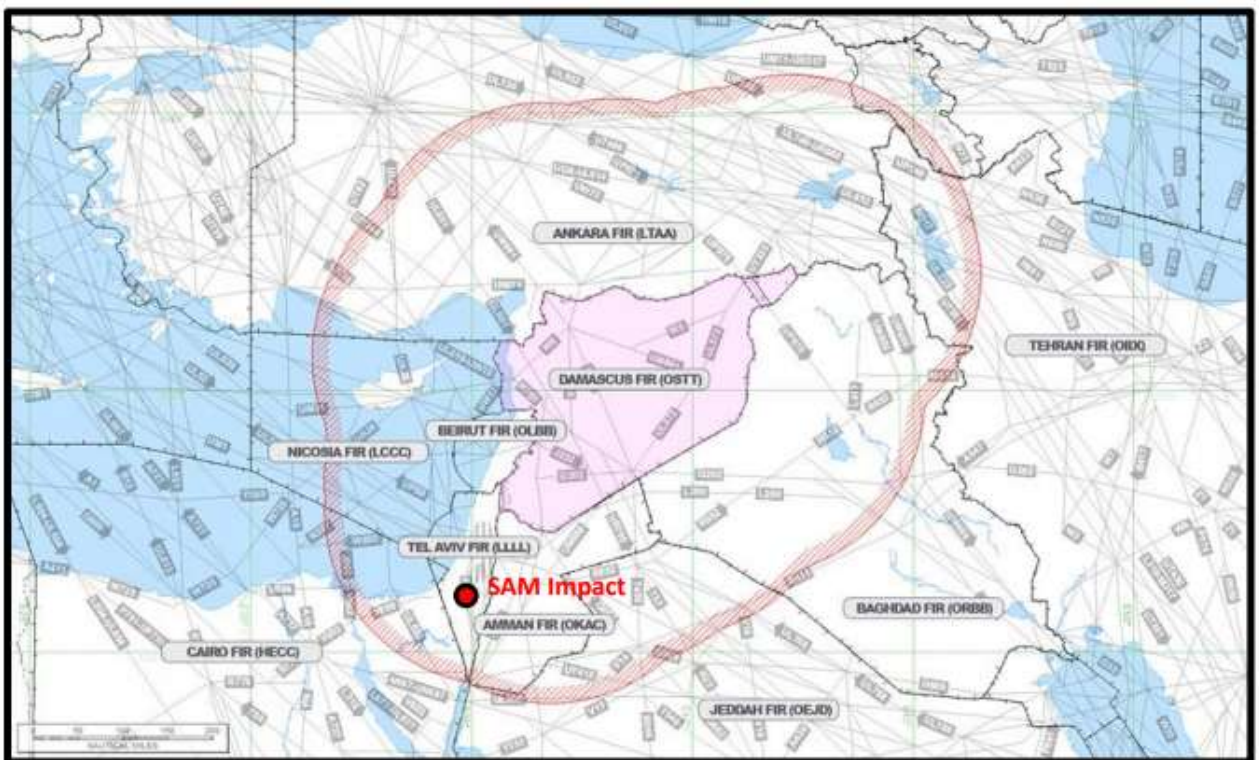
FAA Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 114, 14 C.F.R. § 91.1609, prohibits U.S. civil aviation operations in the entire Damascus (OSTT) FIR due to significant, continuing hazards to civil aviation associated with the ongoing, complex conflict in Syria. The FAA also maintains an advisory Notice-to-Airmen (NOTAM), KICZ A0009/18, which advises U.S. civil aviation to

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exercise caution when operating in the airspace within 200NM of the Damascus (OSTT) FIR due to heightened military activity in and around Syria. As described in NOTAM KICZ A009/18, such military activity may include Global Positioning System (GPS) interference, communications jamming, and possible errant long-range SAMs.

Copies of all FAA-issued flight prohibition SFARs, flight prohibition NOTAMs, and advisory NOTAMs are available on the FAA's Prohibitions, Restrictions, and Notices website at: [http://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/us\\_restrictions/](http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/).

If there are any questions, please contact the FAA Threat Analysis Division (AXE-200) at 202-267-3203 or [FAA-Watch@faa.gov](mailto:FAA-Watch@faa.gov).



***Approximate SA-5 SAM impact site in southern Israel (red circle with black border).***

***Approximate boundaries of FAA SFAR 114 (purple) and advisory NOTAM A0009/18 (red outline).***

***This graphic is for situational awareness only and is not to be used for navigational purposes.***